

To the Wonderful People of Aruba

We have had the privilege of visiting your beautiful island twice. My husband and I wanted to return again this year, but were not able to do so. Rather than vacation somewhere else, we put off our holiday until we are able to return to Aruba. That is how much we love your beautiful island. Yes, we love the sunshine and the breeze. Yes, we love that beaches and the resorts. Yes, we love the casinos and the food. But there is so much more about your island, and your people that we love.

My husband developed a nasty sinus infection on our last vacation to Aruba. We spoke to a Doctor, and were sent to a pharmacy at the hospital complex to pick up the prescribed medicine. It was there that we left the tourist sights behind and saw the true face of the Aruban people. And they were beautiful faces, one and all. We waited nearly two hours to have our name called, but it was time well spent. We saw well behaved children who were patient and kind to one another. Communal toys were shared between them without any quarreling. Older children acquiesced in the wants and needs of the younger children, and they did so with smiling faces. Their generosity was genuine. We witnessed very ill older citizens who were treated with consideration and respect. During that two hours, on a very warm day in July, we never heard one child cry. There were no temper tantrums. There were soft spoken words of direction from watchful parents. Believe me when I tell you that the people of Aruba could give lessons to the people of America on the subject of child rearing and basic common courtesy.

We always encourage our friends to consider Aruba for their vacations, because it is such a safe island. We have been to many islands in the Caribbean, and we have found no other island where we feel comfortable walking the sidewalks at 2:00 am.

The tragic events of these last few weeks have caused some in the media to portray your island in a bad light. The American people are used to the "hype" of the media and take much of what they print and say with a very large grain of salt. I ask you not to blame and grow resentful of Americans, because the media does not speak for the vast majority of us.

My husband and I will return to your island as soon as we are able. Until then, we hold Natalie Holloway, her family and friends, and the people of Aruba in our hearts and prayers.

Kathleen and Leonard Cefalo
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